

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13

October 16, 2020

Power and Rebellion

One reason for Jesus’ popularity with the common people may have been because he spoke to them like adults and instead of imposing arbitrary laws on them, trusted them to do the right thing. Meanwhile, the scribes and Pharisees *“tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.”* Just before that he said, *“they preach but do not practice.”* (Mt. 23:3-4)

While there is not a direct line from what Jesus said about the scribes and Pharisees to the people in power in our lives today, there is a similarity. They are not treating us like adults; they talk to us like we are 5 year olds.

Two examples of this are in recent “guidelines” from the governor and Dr. Fauci. The latter said that we should avoid Thanksgiving gatherings, even with extended family. And the governor said that when in a restaurant, we should “put your mask on in between bites” (I thought that was a joke when I saw it, but our governor actually said that). They offered no science or data for these rules; they are just rules.

There are two kinds of leaders, broadly speaking. There are those who seek to control people and those who trust people. The latter provide reasonable guidelines, explain why it’s important to follow them, and then trust the people to do what is right. They do not seek to micromanage them.

What approach do you prefer from the elders? There are churches where the elders micromanage the members, set strict, often arbitrary, rules even in areas of judgment, and are ready to punish anyone who questions them. Those churches are a mess and not long for this world (many have already died and others are just waiting for someone to preach their funeral, as an old preacher used to say).

Most of us do not want to be micromanaged. For example, how do you like it when you’re driving in an area you’re familiar with but your passenger is giving you instructions at every turn? Me, neither.

Pure hearted adults want the facts and the logic (the reason “why?”) and then they will respond positively. Their conscience demands that. Paul said in I Timothy 1,

“The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.” (v. 6).

But when rules are forced on us with little or no explanation (we might say with no “science” or “data”), then there is a feeling that we are being manipulated or treated like those Paul describes in vv. 8-9:

“Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane...”

In other words, Paul says, laws are given to restrain sociopaths and those with no self-control. But for the adults in the room, just tell us the best practice with the reason behind it and we’ll do that right thing.

Good leaders know that more laws with arbitrary and inconsistent application often leads to rebellion. There’s a breaking point because people see through it. It’s happening now. There are many instances of leaders not even following the rules they impose on others (that’s *hypocrisy*). Nor is there consistent application of the rules; there are rules imposed on churches that are more strict than on casinos.

This is generating a quiet rebellion. Americans may not throw tea into the Boston Harbor this time, but there is a rebellion underway, if only in hearts and minds.

Pollster Scott Rasmussen found that nearly 60% of likely voters — and 70% of undecideds — believe the U.S. shouldn’t lock down again, that we should “move forward.” Only 24% of those polled approve of more lockdowns. Efforts to shut us up in our homes again will go over like that proverbial “lead balloon.”

Let me be clear: We are taking every reasonable precaution to protect others from getting the coronavirus. We are committed to doing what we can *reasonably* do to keep this dangerous, ugly disease out of our “household of faith” at Folsom. But we also have a commitment to *“shepherd the flock that is among you, exercising oversight...”* (I Peter 5:2). To shepherd means to guide and to feed, as well as protect. We do not have the freedom to let anyone or anything *arbitrarily* derail our commitment as shepherds.

We can’t afford to be naive. “Power corrupts...” (you know the rest). I’ve seen too many examples of the ruling class flexing their authority muscles whenever they can, usually because there is a financial or political payoff of some kind. An obsession to utilize power has led to slavery, wars, economic depression and all sorts of human distress.

There is some alarming stuff going on. Yesterday a video was posted of plainclothes policemen in New York secretly taking photos through a window to see if there were any Jews who were gathered in the building. The governor and mayor have threatened to arrest people who go to the synagogue. Seems kind of Third Reich-ish to me.

The day may come when we will have to make a decision against the governing authorities to *“obey God rather than men”* (Acts 5:29). I figured my grandkids would have to face that, but now I’m not so sure that our generation will not be dealing with it sooner rather than later. If it comes to that, we pray we’ll have the courage to do the right thing.

*Unless otherwise indicated the opinions expressed in this publication and images used are solely those of David Posey.
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